
John P. “Sean” Coffey



General Counsel Department of the Navy



John P. (“Sean”) Coffey was sworn into office on February 16, 2022, as the 24th General Counsel of the Department of the Navy after his confirmation by the U.S. Senate on February 9, 2022. As General Counsel, Mr. Coffey is the Department of the Navy’s (DON) Chief Legal Officer and head of the Office of the General Counsel (OGC). He leads more than 1,100 attorneys and professional support staff in 140 offices worldwide. DON OGC provides legal advice to the Secretary of the Navy, the Under Secretary of the Navy, the Assistant Secretaries of the Navy and their staffs, and the multiple components of the Department, to include the Navy and the Marine Corps.

He is a native of New York. Mr. Coffey is the oldest of seven children born to Irish immigrants. He is an honors graduate of the United States Naval Academy and Georgetown University Law Center. After graduating from Annapolis, Mr. Coffey completed Naval Flight Officer training and served eight years on active duty, including assignments as a P-3C Orion mission commander hunting Soviet submarines during the Cold War, a junior officer intern to the Strategy Division in the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the special military assistant (personal aide) to Vice President George H.W. Bush. Mr. Coffey attended Georgetown Law’s evening program while assigned to the Pentagon and White House. After graduating from Georgetown, Mr. Coffey transitioned to the Navy Reserve and returned to New York, where he practiced law for over thirty-five years, including several years as an Assistant United States Attorney in the Southern District of New York and most recently as Chair of Complex Litigation at Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP.

After returning home to New York, Mr. Coffey continued to serve in the Navy Reserve for eighteen years. Among other things, he flew anti-submarine missions in the North Atlantic and Mediterranean, counter-narcotics missions in the Caribbean, and armed missions in support of the blockade of the former Yugoslavia. Mr. Coffey was selected to serve as commanding officer both of a reserve P-3C squadron (VP-92) and the reserve component of the Enterprise carrier battle group staff (CCDG-12), and served as a staff officer in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs). Mr. Coffey retired at the rank of captain in 2004.

Last Updated: 4 March 2022